

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7177

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 2912

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EMIN, EIND, EINV, TD, JM, GY

SUBJ: MANLEY DEMURS ON TRINIDAD-JAMAICA-GUYANA SMELTER
PROJECT

REF: POS 2910

1. DURING A COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION OF GOJ PROGRAMS IN
A COMMENCEMENT SPEECH TO THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (ST.
AUGUSTINE) ON DECEMBER 14, JAMAICAN PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY
DESCRIBED JAMAICA'S ARRANGEMENT WITH MEXICO FOR ALUMINA/ALUMINUM
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT POINTEDLY DID NOT EVEN MENTION MUCH-
TOUTED JAMAICAN-TRINIDADIAN-GUYANESE PLANS FOR A JOINT
ALUMINUM SMELTER PROJECT.

2. LATER IN THE EVENING AFTER SPEECH DCM HAD OPPORTUNITY
AT SMALL GATHERING TO QUESTION MANLEY FURTHER ON BAUXITE. MANLEY
CONFIRMED THAT HIS FAILURE TO MENTION TRIPARTITE SMELTER PROJECT
DURING HIS SPEECH WAS INDEED DELIBERATE. HE NOTED THAT THE
ARRANGEMENT WITH MEXICO WAS QUITE CONCRETE BUT THAT THE
TRIPARTITE PROJECT WAS STILL HIGHLY TENTATIVE. HE ADDED THAT HE DID
NOT MAKE A PRACTICE OF PUBLICLY ANNOUNCING VERY TENTATIVE
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PROPOSALS WHICH MIGHT NOT COME TO FRUITION (NOTE:

THIS APPEARED TO BE DIRECT REFERENCE TO ERIC WILLIAMS' PROCLIVITY TO DO JUST THAT). MANLEY FURTHER NOTED THAT THE THREE PRIME MINISTERS WOULD BE DISCUSSING THE PROPOSED TRIPARTITE SMELTER THE NEXT DAY (SUNDAY DEC 15) IN PORT OF SPAIN BUT THAT HE WAS VERY UNSURE WHAT THE OUTCOME WOULD BE.

3. MONDAY MORNING NEWSPAPERS CARRY NO NEWS OF ANY CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SUNDAY MEETING. THERE WERE THEREFORE NO DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENTS.

4. DURING CONVERSATION DCM COMPLIMENTED MANLEY ON AMICABLE AND MUTUALLY REWARDING SETTLEMENT WITH KAISER AND NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH GUYANA WAS NOMINALLY TRYING TO FOLLOW JAMAICA'S LEAD IN BAUXITE NEGOTIATIONS, IT DID NOT APPEAR TO BE HAVING QUITE THE SAME RESULT. DCM FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT, BASED ON JAMIACAN SUCCESS, MANLEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE ABLE TO SHARE HIS EXPERIENCE WITH HIS CARIBBEAN COLLEAGUES. MANLEY RESPONDED ENTHUSISTICALLY AND SAID THAT PURPOSE OF JAMAICAN DIALOGUE WITH COMPANIES HAD BEEN NOT ONLY TO RESTRUCTURE ECONOMICS OF INDUSTRY IN RELATION TO PRIMARY PRODUCT, BUT ALSO NOT TO THROW OUT THE BABY WITH THE BATHWATER IN THE PROCESS. HE SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED THAT AMICABLE SOLUTION WAS REACHED WITH KAISER AND WITH SUGGESTION THAT THIS COULD BE INSTRUCTIVE FOR GUYANA.

5. COMMENT: BASED ON MANLEY'S PERFORMANCE HERE, WE WONDER IF GOTT PREDICTIONS ON TRIPARTITE SMELTER DEVELOPMENT MAY NOT BE A BIT OPTIMISTIC. CERTAINLY HE DID NOT CONVEY ANY OF THE ENTHUSIASM WHICH MARKS ATTITUDES OF SENIOR TRINIDAD GOVT OFFICIALS TOWARD THE SMELTER. WHEN RESULTS OF SUNDAY'S TRIPARTITE

MEETING BECOME KNOWN WE CAN BETTER JUDGE REAL DEGREE OF MUTUAL COMMITMENT OR NON-COMMITMENT TO TRINIDAD'S DREAM PROJECT.
MILLER

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